

CONGRESSMAN

Michael McCaul

2005 Update for Texas' Veterans



CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

This mailing was prepared, published and mailed at taxpayer expense. It is provided as a service to my Congressional District constituents.

"Honoring and caring for our veterans is a sacred duty. When we remember their accomplishments for America and the world, we must always remember what each and every veteran sacrificed. Even though a service member comes home and has changed, either in mind or body, the federal government should not only provide benefits, but should also be there to help make them whole again. It is our duty, as much as possible, to give our veterans every opportunity to have peaceful and happy lives.

Congress has worked to provide unprecedented increases in veterans' health care funding: since 2001, VA's health care budget has risen over 40 percent.

Those who served in the past, those who serve today and those who will serve in the future must be assured that health care benefits will be there if they are injured or in need.

Meeting the needs of our nation's veterans will continue to be a major focus and priority of mine in Congress."

Congressman Michael McCaul



Michael T. McCaul
M.C.

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How to Reach Congressman McCaul:

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Visit my website and sign up for my e-newsletter at: www.house.gov/mccaul/

VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT

Teaching duty, honor, sacrifice and service to country is one of the most lasting gifts we can contribute to our children. To that end, Congress created the Veterans History Project, a national repository of first-hand accounts from U.S. Veterans. Spanning the 20th and 21st century, from World War I to the current Afghan and Iraq conflicts, veterans are encouraged to participate in the Project so that generations of Americans can learn the stories of wartime, and how their efforts changed the world.

The Veterans History Project, run by the Library of Congress, collects and preserves audio and video recorded oral histories and personal narratives from America's veterans and those civilians who contributed to the war efforts. For more information on how you can be one of the thousands who have already contributed their stories, please contact Congressman McCaul's Washington, D.C. office or the Project's website at: www.loc.gov/folklife/vets/vets-home.html



Congressman McCaul meets with a veteran at a Memorial Day event held by the Travis County Council of Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Congressman Michael McCaul

Working Hard for Texas' Veterans

RECENT LEGISLATION SUPPORTED by Congressman McCaul

✓ H.R. 2528, the Military Quality of Life Appropriations Bill:

- Provides \$21 billion on veterans' medical services, which is \$1 billion over the budget request and \$1.64 billion over FY05, and gives \$2.2 billion for specialty mental health care for veterans — the first time this has been done,
- Requires a comprehensive study on post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) focusing on improving mental health research, care and access to information for veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan,
- Increases veterans' benefits overall by \$1.5 billion over the previous year, reflecting expanded benefits for Guard and Reserve personnel.

✓ H.R. 1268, the Wartime Supplemental Appropriations Bill:

Increases service member Group Life Insurance benefits from \$250,000 to \$400,000 and death gratuity for combat fatalities from \$12,000 to \$100,000.

✓ H.R. 3200 Servicemembers' Group Life Enhancement Act:

Will allow for the maximum coverage for Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) and Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI) to be permanently increased to \$400,000, and also boosts the incremental increases in both of these life insurance programs from the current \$10,000 to \$50,000. Affecting only SGLI, the bill also requires the Pentagon to notify the servicemember's spouse in writing (or the next of kin if the servicemember is unmarried) if the servicemember declines SGLI coverage or chooses an amount less than the maximum. The military also must notify a spouse should someone other than the spouse or child be designated as the policyholder's beneficiary.

✓ H.R. 1352, the Veterans' Employment and Respect Act:

Encourages employers to hire veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as the dependents of our fallen soldiers.

VA Health Care Budget Increases

Veterans have sacrificed much of themselves for America and for freedom, and providing the necessary funds to ensure Veterans have first class medical care continues to be one of Congress' highest priorities. This year, Veterans' medical services are slated to receive the highest funding level in history — a 9% or \$1.6 billion increase over last year. Veteran's medical care funding has increased by 40% since 2001, and 86% since 1995. America's veterans should expect nothing less.

Preventing shortfalls in the VA budget for FY06

In June 2005, Congressman McCaul learned that the Veterans' Administration had underestimated its current expenses because of rising long-term health care costs and the high demand for VA services. On June 30, he voted for H.R. 3130, Making Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2005 for Veterans' Medical Services. The bill appropriates \$975 million over and above what was previously appropriated for the year so that veterans' medical facilities would be fully funded in the fiscal year. In July 2005, when another shortfall in VA funding was discovered, Congressman McCaul again went to bat for veterans by voting for yet another increase in veterans medical funding, this time for an additional \$1.5 billion (over and above the June 30 and May 26 appropriations).



President Bush signs into law Congressman McCaul's bill naming the Pflugerville Post office after fallen hero Sergeant Byron W. Norwood.

Helpful Contact Information for Texas Veterans:

Cut and save this information!

VA Regional Office in Houston & Waco, Texas (Benefits)

(800) 827-1000

VA Regional Office TDD

(800) 829-4833

Markers and Headstones

(800) 697-6947

Gulf War Help Line

(800) 749-8387

Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center

713-791-1414 or 1-800-553-2278

Central Texas Veterans Health Care System - Waco VA Medical Center

(254) 752-6581

Central Texas Veterans Health Care System - Austin Outpatient Clinic

(512) 389-1010

